

Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

This publication was produced in 2000 as
a joint project of:

Wisconsin Department of Natural
Resources - Division of Forestry and the
Bureau of Endangered Resources,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
The Nature Conservancy,
International Paper,
Stora Enso and
Plum Creek.

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and reference publication number FR-174



OSPREY

(*Pandion haliaetus*)

Federal Status: Not Listed

State Status: Threatened



Description: The osprey is a large bird of prey (body length 23 inches, wingspan 5 feet) that plunges into water to capture fish. The bird is black-brown above and mostly white below. Its white head has a broad black cheek patch and its tail is barred with brown. The osprey's long, narrow wings are angled back at the wrist when it flies. A black wrist patch contrasts with the white underwings. Ospreys weigh 3 to 3½ pounds.



Habitat: The osprey is a bird of waterways: rivers, lakes and shorelands. In northern Wisconsin, breeding habitat is generally mature second-growth hardwood and pine forests. Primary nest sites are supercanopy snags and dead-topped pines located along lake and stream shorelines. Additionally, nests may be located in recent clearcuts adjacent to water, on snags in marshes or bogs and in swamp conifer stands. These nests are highly vulnerable to being toppled by wind. Ospreys also nest on powerline poles or other human-made structures. The osprey nest is made of sticks and measures more than 3 feet in diameter. Nests are often repaired and reused year after year.

Forestry Considerations: Since osprey usually nest directly over or near water, following *Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality* will protect their streamside or lakeside habitat. BMPs will also protect water quality, which enhances survival of the fish upon which osprey feed. Avoid disturbances such as timber-cutting and road-building within 660 feet of an active osprey nest during the May 1 to August 15 nesting season.

